5: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Lolo AE4

764 treatment of the little ones who "go home" too early Such a fatal flaw as this in the great system of philosophy associated with the name of China's greatest sage will always prevent it from becoming the base of a great world religion. What children have suffered through parents holding false ideas of philosophy is simply appalling. One scarcely dares to tell all the things one has found out about child life and its sufferings in China. One has such a profound respect and even liking for the Chinese, and a great belief in their future, that one does not like to dwell too much on this, one of the blots on the character of a great people.

Sometimes the hillmen cross the Yangtse to visit friends or relatives in Yunnan and are taken ill in Chinese territory. In such a case they are terribly afraid lest they should die and be buried like the Chinese. The idea of a cold burial, without the warm, comforting blaze of the cremation fire, strikes terror into these Nosu, and they long to die at home, where wood is plentiful and a great fire is readily kindled.

713 292 726 While we were staying at Ah-Pooh's a number of people from the district around came to visit us. Among these visitors was a regular dandy, dressed in huge parti-coloured trousers. The tops of these garments were blue and the bottoms red. The wearer was a striking feature in the crowd. We found out before long that he could do other things than merely strut about in his gay trousers. He and a friend gave me a display of spear-fighting. The spears the two men used were nine yards long. There are some twelve yards long and some even longer. The two men seized the spears and then ran up and down a field as if they

5: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Lolo AE4

were meeting an enemy. All the time they were shouting 713
their war shouts. They attacked an imaginary enemy by 292
thrusting their spears forward and then jumped sideways or 726
into the air as if to avoid counter-thrusts. The best weapon to parry the long spear is the funny-looking trident, which always reminds one of Neptune and the sea. One is rather startled to see that Mars has stolen Neptune's weapon. If the man with the trident can beat down the spear and run past its point he has a great advantage over his opponent with the long, unwieldy weapon. Then the dandy and his companion attacked each other, and the man with the coloured trousers was decidedly the more agile and smart. The way he jumped about, avoiding each attack, was really clever. These young men always go barefoot, and get used to any kind of road. They can get across rough country barefoot as easily as the sandalled Chinese can go over well-trodden roads.

After the spear display they gave us an example of stone- 713
throwing. Before firearms penetrated into these hills stone- 726
throwing was a regular part of their warfare. The Chinese tell many stories of the way the Nosu, getting command of a higher position, have beaten off a band of attacking Chinese merely by throwing stones. The dandy's opponent went up hill and then began pelting him with clods of earth in the same manner as he would have done with stones if the fight had been a real one. All these missiles the dandy turned aside with his arm-protector or just dodged. All the young men wear over the left forearm a protector made of ox-hide covered with jet-black Chinese lacquer. The hide is so strong that with it they can easily parry the cut of a sword or beat off a stone thrown at them. As I watched the men knocking

S: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Lolo AE4

584 and offered to perform for the amusement of Ah-yee and his household. The whole establishment turned out into the yard, and among them the young girl. She entered as heartily into the fun as any of the others. After the players had gone away Ah-yee discovered that in the band was the young Earth Eye who wanted his daughter. The enterprising young fellow had bribed the strollers to let him be one of their band temporarily, and on their consenting had led them to his would-be father-in-law's home. He enjoyed the adventure very much, and saw all that he wished to see. The father of the girl was wild at what he termed the great insult, and said that if he had found it out in time he would have given the suitor a sound thrashing. I wonder whether the girl repented at not having dressed in her very best on the occasion of the clandestine visit of her lover. Later the enterprising young fellow came to a terrible end, and the girl he wanted was given as second wife to his uncle, a man old enough to be her father.

[463] While I was staying with Ah-yee I noticed that he had a 292 tailor at work making a number of garments. One of these 751 garments was of red flannel and had a number of Nosu words worked on the front. Ah-yee told me that these were a charm which would protect the wearer of the garment whenever he was in a fight or in great trouble. He gave me one such garment later on. I have had no need to test the protective qualities of this magic garment, and am afraid the donor did not believe the yarn he told me about the wonderful red jacket.

791 These great Earth Eyes are frequently the prey of wizards 842 and necromancers. Lo-chee, in spite of his seven wives, had no son. A necromancer was consulted and he gave it as his verdict that the castle was built in the wrong position, so interfering with the hidden influences of the soil. In

5: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Lolo AE4

000 of China, both Sons of Han and aboriginals, to conquer in the fight against the passions which have done so much harm to them all.

541 The Nosu men would readily take to sports. With their splendid little ponies, almost human in their intelligence and responding so readily to the wishes of their riders, one can imagine that polo would be very popular, and horse-racing, without its vice of gambling, would stir the hills far more than the biggest of clan fights or the most promising of raids into Chinese territory. Horse-racing is not unknown in West China, and at one of these equestrian trials a Nosu horse owned by my friend Mr Long easily beat all comers. The prize offered by the official in charge of the Republican Commemoration sports was but a small one, and Mr Long refused it. He merely had his horse decorated with a long piece of red cloth and had it led all around for the spectators to look at. There is one tribe that once a year has a bull-fight among all the bulls of the neighbouring villages. The final conqueror is also decorated with red. This debasing custom missionaries are stopping, with the consent of the people.

533 292 One evening while we were at See-tieh there was a break in our yarning by the fire, caused by the arrival of two singers who were anxious to show the visitors what they could do. Standing awhile outside the door, one of the singers sang:

I am a young man and not clever,
The clouds are coming up over the heavens,
The crows are croaking:
Will there be any fruit on the trees?
My wrist is just made for a golden bracelet.

Being assured that there might be some fruit on the trees—

5: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Lolo AE4

i.e. some gratuity to the troubadours—they entered the house. They wore white turbans, with a great horn of cloth sticking out from the side of the head. The chief singer began to sing, moving across the room in slow fashion, and going through various movements of the body as he did so. His actions and song were then repeated by the second singer, who seemed to be a kind of understudy of his leader. The first wore felt socks and straw sandals, the other was barefoot. Each had on the usual dark-coloured cape. They sang about the good old days when they were so rich that they could even chop up pieces of silver to feed their pigs with, and when their master was the richest and best in all the world.

To me the entertainment was a very tame one, but it pleased the others and therefore pleased me. The two singers had a look at my watch, and were startled at the ticking of it. The widow with the gorgeous robes was deeply interested in it and tried to get some of the other women to put it to their ears. They were too afraid to do so. The fear of magic was too strong with them. Their curiosity was more than baffled by their superstitions.

There was one of my movements which excited them very much indeed. When I wished to change the plates in my camera I got under my wadded sleeping quilt. They wondered what in the world I could be doing under that quilt. At last one of the men walked across and felt the quilt. Immediately he had done so he cried out: "He is still there." He evidently thought that I possessed the secret of becoming invisible. If some of them could have been with me a few years ago at the Egyptian Hall, what would they have thought?

5: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Lolo AE4

China. It is possible that China will entirely prohibit the exportation of such skins.

The old chief, among his other weapons, had a fine sword, with handle cased in silver and with the hilt ornamented with the same metal. At the end of the handle was a flat, round knob of silver, looking like a small Spanish grandee's hat. The sword was worth about five pounds. I noticed that the chief wore a pair of felt socks, each sock made in one piece and beautifully warm.

In the morning we all clung to the fire, and with the door shut the place was very dark. Except when the wood blazed up, it was too dark to see each other's faces across the fire. As I made my notes I could not see a single letter of what I wrote. It was not too dark, however, to find out that the constant squatting on the floor was ruination to the suit of clothes I was wearing. It did not matter a great deal, for when in Chinese territory I always wear Chinese clothes, and it was only necessary for this suit to keep together until I got back over the Yangtse again.

Our host was very anxious to kill an ox for us that morning, but as we were anxious to push on to another farmstead we begged him to let us off this time. After a lot of trouble we got our own way, and fowls were killed instead of the ox. Once more the chief pressed his idea of making the foreigner head of the four clans. So earnest was he in this that I began to feel very uncomfortable. In the abstract the idea was all right, and to a wanderer in search of adventures merely, it would be a regular godsend. Anything out of the ordinary is what one likes, and here there seemed a prospect of something very much out of the ordinary. Fancy a missionary riding at the head of a band of Black Bloods,

5: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Lolo AE4

411 Vri-tsuh, a member of the family, was reckoned the crack shot in the whole district. So often did his bullets find their billet that the people said they could go around corners and that it was no use hiding from them. When Vri-tsuh pointed his gun at you you might just as well come and give
• 242 yourself up, for there was no escape. While we were at
714 Mao-an-tsz, one of Vri-tsuh's companions dressed up in full
574 war dress and made some sport for us. He is said to have killed twenty people, and, of course, had a great reputation as a warrior. He was indeed wonderfully dressed. He had on a thickly quilted scarlet jacket which stones and bullets fired from the old-fashioned guns were unable to pierce. In the back of this jacket was a rent made by a dart thrown at him in one of his fights. Across his shoulders he had a double sword-belt, ornamented with polished white stones. From this was hanging a long sword, with silver handle and with silver mountings on the sheath. It was estimated as worth a hundred ounces of silver. The scarlet coat was ornamented in the centre and at the edges. On his head the warrior wore a large conical hat in white and red. Around the hat was a yellow turban, and hanging down behind, a long yellow pugaree. There were thick flaps to cover the face if necessary. From the back of the hat there also hung down a long flap with red edges, and black and white cross-bars. From the shoulders there was suspended a huge yak tail, and by the side of this some slips of ornamented Chinese silk. The yak tail must have been several pounds in weight. It was very heavy. To complete the array the warrior was in bare feet, and had a modern rifle. He drew his sword and, rushing
702 all about, went through various exercises. He invited me to
574 throw stones at him, and I did so. Do what I could, I failed

5: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Lolo AE4

After we had enjoyed all the excitements of the sham fight and mimic hill warfare we went home again and turned our attention to something much more interesting. Ah-ku asked me if I had ever seen a lady's full state dress. I immediately took the hint and said I should be delighted if she would give us that privilege. She then proposed that she should dress up one of her daughters in full Nosu fashion. It was professedly for my benefit, but probably it was the favour of Mr Long's eye that was sought. The daughter at first demurred a little, but that was overcome. The ladies retired into the tower rooms, while we waited outside in the main room. After a while the young lady appeared in all her gorgeous attire. I wish I could do justice to the young lady. A lady's pen should describe a lady's dress. There was, of course, the usual large head-dress, which gives a stately appearance to all these fine Nosu women. Over the head-dress there was a red band, with nine golden ornaments and three golden phœnixes on it. From the band hung four strips of coloured silk, each having eleven golden ornaments on it. When the head-dress was fully in shape these four strips were looped on either side of the face, setting off the young girl's pretty countenance very finely. Over the back of the hair hung a band of black cloth, covered with silver work. At the end of it was an ornamented double dragon and sixty-one thin hangings of silver. Long coral ear-rings hung down from each ear, and these were tied in a double loop under the chin.

The long satin jacket the young girl wore was beautifully embroidered, and the whole appearance of the girl was very striking. The smoke of the wood fires had made the eyes a little sore. Otherwise the hill lassie was really a taking sight,

574 and she deserved the best husband that could be found for
• 292 her. She was nearly as tall as her mother, but not quite so good-looking. The widow mother had managed to keep her looks in a manner remarkable for a West China woman. Most of such women look old at thirty, and very old at that age when British matrons look most handsome and stately. I hope Mr Long was duly impressed with the beautiful figure and handsome dress of Ah-tsu, the widow's pretty daughter. One fancies that if his son had been there instead of the much-married father there might have been no difficulty in the handsome widow getting a suitable husband for her daughter.

789 During the considerable interval while we were waiting for the young lady to complete her elaborate toilet we went into one of the slave's houses near by to see a wizard at work. Entering a small room, where all were seated round a wood fire, we found our old friend, the See-tieh spearman, come to assist two people from another clan who were in great trouble about something. The wizard had a big narrow drum hung on an irregular frame. He held the drum in position by a stick and string at the back, and beat it by another stick which had some goatskin bound just where the stick would strike the drum. Soon after we came in he began shouting and beating the drum, and kept this up until his particular demon seized him. Then he shook his head in a frenzied manner, tossed off his head-dress, moved his face up and down, and appeared as if he were really possessed. But I could not help thinking the man was simulating this possession. Every now and again he seemed to look at me as if wishing to notice what impression on the visitor the coming of the demon made. He seemed to want to know what was my verdict on his great performance. During the frenzy the